

# Lincolnshire to ask again for partners on Milwaukee Avenue study after being denied grant

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Phil Rockrohr

After unsuccessfully trying earlier this year, Lincolnshire officials again plan to ask neighboring Buffalo Grove, as well as Vernon Hills, about working together on a grant application to study possible improvements to Milwaukee Avenue.

The decision to try again to seek the support of neighboring communities on a widening project, which Lincolnshire officials have said could bolster commercial and economic activity in the area, comes after Buffalo Grove officials rejected a similar request from village officials earlier this summer about partnering together on a grant application with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

At the time, Buffalo Grove officials said they were focused on its ongoing study of the Lake Cook Road corridor and weren't planning on looking into Milwaukee Avenue until 2018 at the earliest, prompting Lincolnshire officials to apply for a CMAP grant on their own.

But in October, CMAP told the village that its grant application was denied, in part, because the planning agency prioritized project applications featuring multiple communities, Lincolnshire officials said in a recent report to village board members.

"Staff followed up with CMAP and learned while our application and project scope were strong, CMAP's board of directors decided to allocate funding for multi-jurisdictional projects and those communities with greater financial need," the board report said. "CMAP stated our chances of receiving funding next year would be greatly enhanced if we partnered with a neighboring municipality."

Lincolnshire budgeted \$65,000 for the study and hoped CMAP would match that funding to begin a planning study for the Milwaukee Avenue corridor in 2017, village officials said in the report.

During a board meeting Oct. 23, Lincolnshire trustees reviewed a proposal to hire a consultant to study the busy corridor that cuts through town but ultimately made the decision to reapply for the CMAP grant, said Village President Liz Brandt.

Brandt and Village Manager Brad Burke now plan to reach back out to Buffalo Grove, but the two officials also will gauge Vernon Hills' interest about the CMAP grant – something Lincolnshire officials said they didn't do earlier this year.

"It was the consensus of the board to try to have a meeting to see if we could join forces and reapply for the grant," Brandt said.

The next application window for CMAP's Local Technical Assistance projects is expected to happen in spring 2018, Lincolnshire officials said.

Dane Bragg, village manager for Buffalo Grove, said local officials again will consider Lincolnshire's idea of partnering together on a Milwaukee Avenue planning study, but he noted that they will have to weigh numerous factors before committing to the idea.

"Factors that could affect our decision include the timing of the project, other projects that are underway that could conflict with our available staffing resources, board priorities, cost, etc.," Bragg said.

Lincolnshire officials, meanwhile, have instructed their public works department to continue studying the possibility of linking pedestrian paths along Milwaukee Avenue and research whether the village could seek a CMAP grant or an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant before expending additional funds on the project, Brandt said.

"The things we're looking at doing in the Milwaukee corridor could also be part of an ITEP grant," she said. "The board felt, let's apply and see what we can do with the surrounding communities."

*Phil Rockrohr is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.*